

# Québec's International Initiatives

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## Québec: A Major Partner for North American Security



### Message from the Minister

***"While the notion of defence may bring to mind relations between sovereign states in the 20th century, security is a broader, 21st-century concept. In many cases, new threats must be addressed at the local level and involve powers, responsibilities and areas of expertise pertaining to federated states."***

**Monique Gagnon-Tremblay**  
Minister of International Relations and  
Minister Responsible for La Francophonie

The security threats facing the international community in the first decade of the 21st century are numerous and varied in nature; indeed, they demand the full attention of all security stakeholders. Although the risk of violent conflicts between states is still present, new threats have appeared, endangering both national and individual security.

In its report entitled *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*,<sup>1</sup> the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change identified a number of new threats requiring international action. In addition to conflicts between states, factors such as violence within states, poverty, transnational organized crime, terrorism, infectious diseases and environmental degradation all contribute to global instability and directly affect security at the international, national, regional and local levels.

In this evolving international context, threats often arise from hostile non-state actors whose activities are clandestine and insidious, and whose impact is harder to quantify; such threats pose a greater risk to individuals than to state sovereignty. Unlike the threat of standard warfare, which ultimately concerns established international systems and military forces, the response to these threats and their consequences primarily involves domestic security. Nowadays, national and international security issues are closely intertwined, and the line between them is increasingly blurred; the same may be said for distinctions between domestic and external affairs.

1. United Nations, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, Report of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, 2004, 99 pp.

## **International security threats**

Market globalization, access to information technology and the free movement of people are among the factors fuelling international security threats. Taking advantage of these factors, organized transnational criminal groups seek to further their criminal activities. Money laundering and the trafficking of drugs, arms and human beings are not only local phenomena; they are also part of organized networks based in North America and around the world.

Terrorist attacks have been carried out on multiple continents in recent years, posing a serious international security threat. Indeed, the tactics used and the goals being sought may end up bypassing traditional counter-terrorism mechanisms.

Moreover, outbreaks of bird flu and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in several countries, along with

## **Proposed solutions**

More than ever, we are interconnected at all levels: the threats facing some individuals today may well affect others tomorrow. To counter these threats, cooperation is required between all security stakeholders. This echoes the appeal made by the UN to its member states and to the international community: efforts must be coordinated at all levels and the necessary technical cooperation mechanisms must be implemented on a local, regional and international basis.

Internationally, a number of tools have been developed and implemented to address these new threats. Related initiatives include domestic counter-terrorism strategies, most notably in the US, France and the UK and under the auspices of the UN, as well as international agreements such as the *International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism*, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized

*"[This] was the first time [the UN member states] agreed that all Governments and organizations must convey the same critical message: terrorism is never justifiable, whether on political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other grounds."*

**Ban Ki-moon**

UN Secretary-General  
International Conference on Terrorism,  
Tunis, November 15, 2007

the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which has infected or killed millions worldwide, and the re-emergence of certain infectious diseases, also pose serious threats to international security.

The multiple effects of environmental degradation and climate change also exacerbate the risks of political and military conflict in various regions around the world.

The use of cyberspace for criminal purposes, such as fraudulent telemarketing, identity theft, child pornography, promotion of terrorism or manipulation of strategic information, is another growing phenomenon.

## **Québec has the capacity to act**

Within the Canadian federation, national security is an area of shared jurisdiction involving provincial and federal powers, which are carried out in a complementary manner. The Government of Québec's exclusive authority over the administration of justice and healthcare services, the shared responsibilities it assumes with respect to the environment and agriculture and the central role it plays in matters of public safety and the protection of its citizens, are a testament to the Government's crucial role in building a more secure world. Québec fully assumes its duties and responsibilities in security matters in a variety of ways.

Québec has its own police forces and enforces the Criminal Code on its territory. Under the authority of the Attorney General of Québec, the Director of Criminal and Penal Prosecutions (DPCP) undertakes proceedings relating to organized crime, drug trafficking, money laundering, terrorism and other offences.

As regards border security matters, the Government of Québec, through the Sûreté du Québec (SQ - Québec's police force) and the City of Montreal Police Department (SPVM), helps implement Canadian and US federal initiatives. Both the SQ and the SPVM have reinforced their capabilities in terms of national security investigations and furthered cooperation in the fight against cross-border and port-related crime.

In the public health field, the Government of Québec plays a key role in monitoring, preventing and treating infectious diseases. In the event of a pandemic, Québec's healthcare system is responsible for taking action in terms of disease prevention and treatment. In addition, the Government is largely responsible for environmental protection.

Québec is thus a driving force behind efforts to make the world a more secure place. With respect to security issues, as well as other matters under its jurisdiction, Québec applies the "Gérin-Lajoie Doctrine". This doctrine implies that Québec ensures, at the international level, the extension of its domestic areas of jurisdiction.

## Taking concrete action

In response to the changing international and North American context, the Government has optimized the effectiveness of its initiatives and enhanced its security capabilities. The publication in 2006 of Québec's International Policy and its 2006-2009 Action Plan reflects the importance the Government places on security issues. One of the Policy's five key objectives – to improve security measures in Québec and to contribute to the security of North America – is backed by concrete actions in the areas of public safety, counter-terrorism, immigration, transportation, health, agriculture, public infrastructure protection and the environment. A total of 14 government departments and agencies are actively involved in achieving these objectives.

## Reinforcing domestic security capabilities

In recent years, Québec has taken steps to reinforce its domestic security capabilities with a view to ensuring reliable and rapid access to strategic information while improving operational efficiency and protecting public infrastructure. The Government has also stepped up information exchanges and optimized the coordination of police services.

Québec has also modified its document authentication regulations, including civil status documents submitted in connection with the issuance of Canadian passports, in a bid to prevent identity theft and similar fraudulent practices. In addition, supporting documents for immigration applications are now subject to more intensive verification.

## Partnership initiatives with European countries

Given the international scope of security issues and in light of Québec's longstanding relations with various European countries and its strategic relationship with France, an SQ officer has been appointed to Québec's Government Office in Paris. In addition, Québec and the francophone nations of Europe have agreed to create an international police training network known as Francopol, designed to identify best practices and share insights relating to police matters. In keeping with its international mandate, Francopol could be extended to include other members of La Francophonie as part of a second-phase expansion.

### Québec's main domestic initiatives

- Creation of the Internal Security Branch (DSE) and **Information Security Management Centre (CGIS)**.
- Creation of the **Government Operations Centre** aimed at coordinating official responses in the event of a disaster.
- Creation of the SQ's **counter-terrorism department**.
- Participation of the SQ and the SPVM in the **Integrated National Security Enforcement Team (INSET) in Montreal**. INSET comprises various partners, including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Canada Border Services Agency and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.
- Permanent assignment of the SQ to the **Maritime Security Enforcement Team**, a joint initiative of the RCMP and the Canadian Coast Guard, as well as to the Marine Security Emergency Response Team in Montreal, together with the SPVM.
- More intensive verification of documents submitted in connection with immigration applications and development of partnerships with organizations from Québec and across Canada responsible for enforcing laws aimed at **reducing immigration-related crime**.
- Implementation of various **non-military international security agreements**, including the *United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime* and the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*; the *International Convention on the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism*; and the *United Nations Convention Against Corruption*.
- Implementation of Québec's 2006-2012 Action Plan on Climate Change.
- Adoption of Québec's Influenza Pandemic Plan.
- Implementation of the **farm-to-table tracking system**.
- Construction of two new **epidemiological monitoring and animal pathology labs**.
- Securing infrastructure at Hydro-Québec's publicly-owned power generation facilities.

## **Partnership initiatives with the US**

The events of 9/11 led to a deeper awareness of terrorism's power and impact. Building on its long track record of cooperation with its US partners, the Government of Québec has intensified its relations and made cooperation with the United States a central focus of its security strategy.

**"Mindful of the fact that security is a prerequisite for trade and steadfast in its determination to protect its citizens, the Government of Québec has made considerable efforts in recent years in this area. By strengthening Québec's internal security measures, the Government has played a valuable role in contributing to the enhancement of North American security."**

**Jean Charest**

Premier of Québec

Extract from a letter to the US Secretary of State and to the Secretary of Homeland Security, Québec City, August 22, 2007

### **Québec's main initiatives with its US partners**

- Cooperation agreement signed on April 15, 2008 with **New York State aimed at fighting terrorism and crime** and reinforcing cooperation between administrative agencies and police forces on both sides of the border.
- Bilateral cooperation agreements covering the **exchange of information** relating to matters of law enforcement with **Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont**.
- Active participation in the **Northeast Regional Homeland Security Directors Consortium** aimed at sharing information, identifying best practices and developing joint strategies. (The Consortium is made up 10 US states and three Canadian provinces; Québec will host its next meeting in fall 2008.)
- New cooperation initiative launched by the Director of Criminal and Penal Prosecution under the authority of **Québec's Attorney General** in order to combat **cross-border crime** in partnership with the **US Northeastern states**.
- **Joint simulation exercises** with the **US Northeastern states** aimed at improving multi-stakeholder coordination in the event of actual or potential emergencies.
- Participation of the Port of Montreal in the **US Container Security Initiative**.
- Installation of infrastructure optimizing traffic flows at Québec border crossings; for example, a **dedicated lane** has been built and intelligent transportation systems have been deployed in the immediate vicinity of the **Lacolle/Champlain border crossing**.
- Development by the **Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ - Québec Automobile Insurance Corporation)** of an enhanced driver's license which may be used in place of a passport by travellers entering the US by land or sea. This new licence will be introduced in late 2008.
- A **mutual assistance agreement** has been signed by the **Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers** aimed at optimizing emergency management services in the event of a natural disaster or resource shortages. The US Congress and the President ratified the agreement on December 26, 2007.
- Financial support has been given to Québec-based manufacturing companies to join the **Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism program (C-TPAT)**.
- Continued focus of the **Québec Border Security Initiative** on activities aimed at furthering mutual understanding of North American security issues. These activities are carried out in close cooperation with the **US Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)**.
- **Scientific cooperation** has been established with the **US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** aimed at optimizing detection and prevention of threats associated with infectious diseases, pandemics and bioterrorism.
- Technical cooperation with US border states with a view to speeding detection of infectious diseases under the **Eastern Border Health Initiative (EBHI)**. Québec hosted the EBHI meeting in May 2008.

**Relations Internationales**

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